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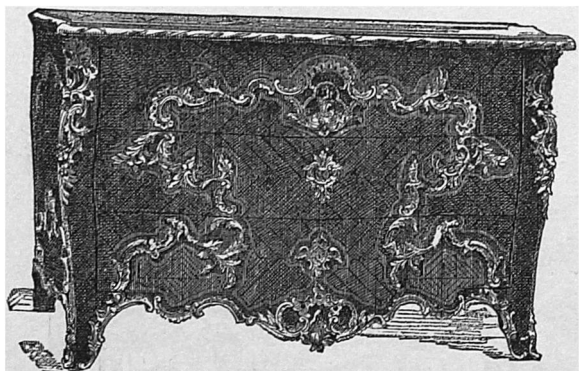
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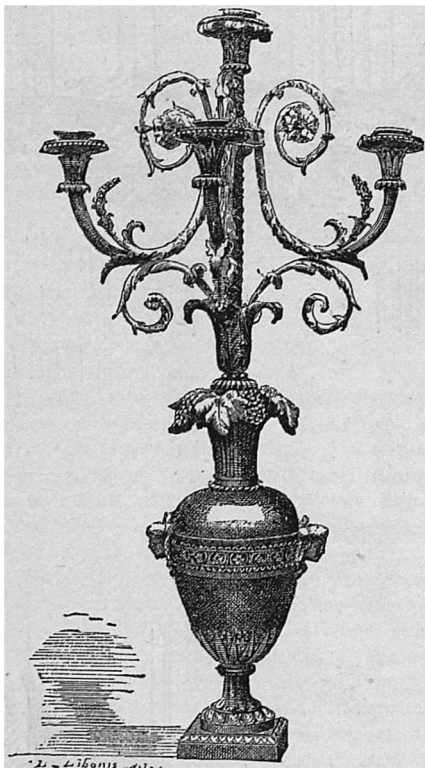
COMMUNE, IN ROSEWOOD, WITH METAL ORNAMENTATION.

FRENCH FURNITURE.

BY THEODORE CHILD.

ORNAMENTATION IN METAL.

THE Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans constantly, and the Europeans occasionally have employed bronze and even the precious metals in the entire fabrication of such furniture as chairs and tables. Louis XIV., Queen Anne, and other sovereigns and princes possessed tables of solid silver, and a very admirable specimen dating from about 1700 is still preserved at



CANDELABRA IN BRONZE, LOUIS XVI.

Windsor Castle. In the present case, however, we are concerned only with the application of metal to the work of the cabinet maker as a means of ornamentation.

Two distinct systems of metallic enrichment present themselves to our notice: the one employs pillars, colonettes, panels, friezes and medallions of metal in low relief or repoussé work; the other employs metal purely for the sake of ornament and in the form of moldings, corner fittings, handles, drawer-pulls, and key holes or *entrées de serrures*, as the French term runs. The former system was employed by the Dutch, the Spanish, the Italian and the French cabinet makers, especially in the time of the Renaissance; the latter was carried to its highest perfection in France in the eighteenth century; while both systems are employed by the modern French cabinet maker, but unfortunately with little attempt at originality. The first system requires little explanation; the reader can readily imagine the architectural richness of a Renaissance cabinet or credence relieved with inserted panels of burnished brass set off by the framework of warm walnut or ebony.

The second system reaches its complete development with the invention of the "commode" or chest of drawers, an article of furniture which we first meet with in the seventeenth century, and of which the most splendid specimens were produced under the reigns of Louis XV. and XVI. Under the reign of Louis XIV. the gilt

bronze mascarons and borders are accessories to the majestic splendor of Boule *marqueterie*; in the succeeding reigns they form the only ornament of the wood or lacquer surface of the furniture.

During the regency, and in the early years of the reign of Louis XV., furniture became less official, less pompous. The kinds of woods employed more various and amusing; the *petite appartements* succeed the parade salons of the past; the bedroom becomes the nest of private life, and the boudoir and cabinet create a thousand elegant and convenient corners for the frivolous and charming comedy that French society is about to play. Hence we find many new articles of furniture: the commode with its multiple divisions, the chiffonier with its innumerable drawers; the secretary which, with its closed panel, can hide so many secrets, and which, with its flap let down, serves as a table whereon the fair ladies of Versailles can write their *billets doux*. The bureau itself is no longer the loyal large table open to all eyes, but a convenient combination of writing table and drawers, that disappear at a moment's notice from sight beneath the neatly sliding cylinder top.

We are entering upon a period when elegance and caprice go hand in hand with the most fertile fancy; forms assume the wildest license; nothing is henceforward straight and regular; everything swells out with strange contours and unexpected sinuosities. Swelling, undulating, curiously rounded surfaces are alone admitted, and on them grow luxuriant vegetations of bronze, developing into the most fantastically frizzled and intertwined foliage; gilded brass climbs and creeps over the outlines in the most capricious borders and cornices and arabesques, spring out into astonishing handles, twists itself into cariatids and corner pieces, and festoons off into graceful garlands; and so is formed an odd decorative whole, always amusing, always rich and strange, and often elegant by force of intelligent and tasteful originality.

In this furniture of the Louis XV. epoch, caprice is often pushed so far that the fundamental law of decorative art—appropriateness to the end—is forgotten, and the chest of drawers swells and bulges anteriorly and laterally to such a point that the drawers, necessarily rectangular, are isolated and leave waste spaces at each side.

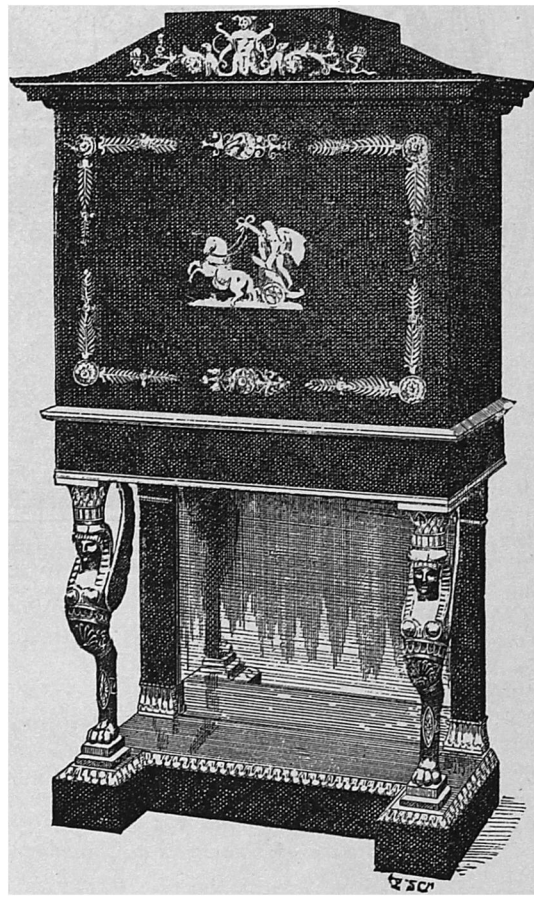
For that matter in the furniture of this Louis XV. epoch, the degree of exaggeration in the form and the ornamentation provides a sort of chronology of the epoch. In the beginning the bronze ornaments in low relief remain within moderate limits of curliness and caprice, revealing new tendencies and yet protesting against an absolute divorce with the preceding style; then, under the influence of the robust and extravagant genius of Meisssonier all timidity disappears and the ornamentation becomes boldly and wildly capricious, but nevertheless wins our admiration by the splendor and delicacy of the chiseling; then in the next reign we have the reaction against this excess and the return to a comparative severity of line based on a resuscitation of classical models.

Many of the designs of Percier and Fontaine, the two great architects and decorative artists of the first empire, are not only grandiose but in excellent taste, a fact which modern amateurs are at length beginning to recognize.

As a general rule metal in its diverse forms, iron, brass, bronze, gold, silver, etc., can only fill a moderate, limited and restricted rôle in the decoration of the house, as, for instance, in balustrades, door, and window fittings, glass frames,

cornices and in the accessories of the fireplace. In the composition of furniture, too, metal is appropriate only as an accessory and on the condition that it never loses its ornamental character and never enters into the regular architecture of the piece of furniture.

As M. Henri Havard admirably says in his *L'Art dans la Maison*: "The sumptuousness of a king who took the sun for his emblem, the indefatigable genius of a Boule, the inventive taste of a Cressent, the prodigious ability of artists of the eminence of Riessener and Caffieri, were able to carry the employment of metal in furniture to a point that verged upon prodigality. Nevertheless these exceptional men only succeeded in their audacious attempt because they respected logic and form. Although in their admirable works metal holds an overpowering place and often represents, both in workmanship and in material, a value much superior to that of the wood, it



BONHEUR DU JOUR, IN MAHOGANY, AND ORNAMENTED IN GOLD BRONZE; TIME OF FIRST EMPIRE.

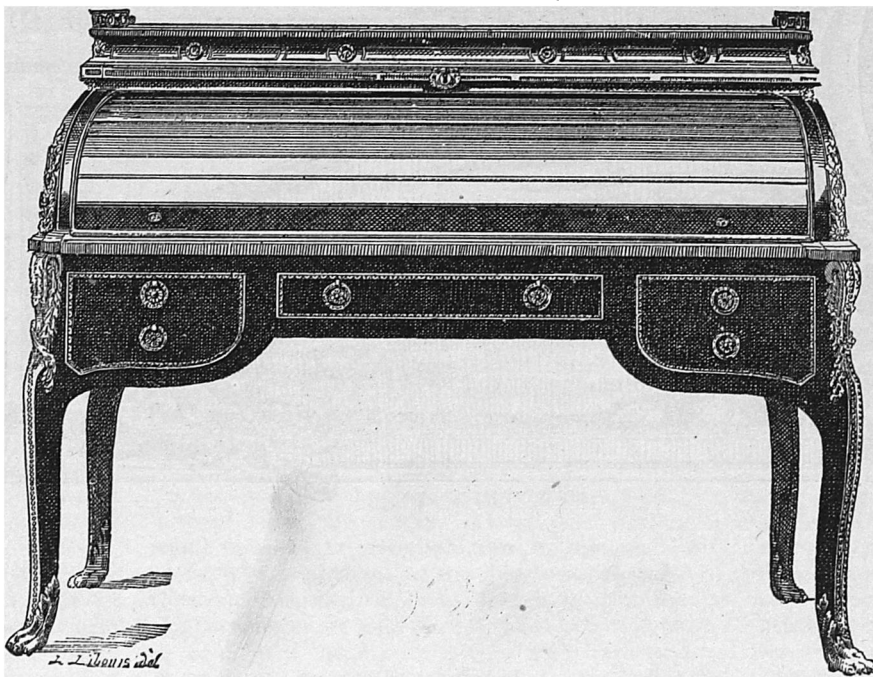
nevertheless remains always subordinate. And it is only towards the end of the reign of Louis XVI. when bronze began to play a preponderating rôle that furniture at once lost its equilibrium and its reason, its elegance, its grace, and its charm.

We must not fear to repeat that it is a capital error to combine metal with wood in large masses, and to employ, as the artist of the first empire did, bronze sphinxes to support a light console of elm wood or cariatids of the same material to carry a fragile table of veneered mahogany.

There we see, beginning with the seventeenth century, metal and more particularly gilt bronze applied to the ornamentation of furniture assumes capital importance, and thanks to the reunion at the Louvre and then at the Gobelins of all the artists charged with the manufacture of the royal furniture, and thanks to the superintendence of one man of high talent, Lebrun, the work of the epoch of Louis XIV. presents itself as a harmonious whole full of grandeur, dominated by the thought of one man, whose supreme influence produced a solidarity amongst the individual artists.

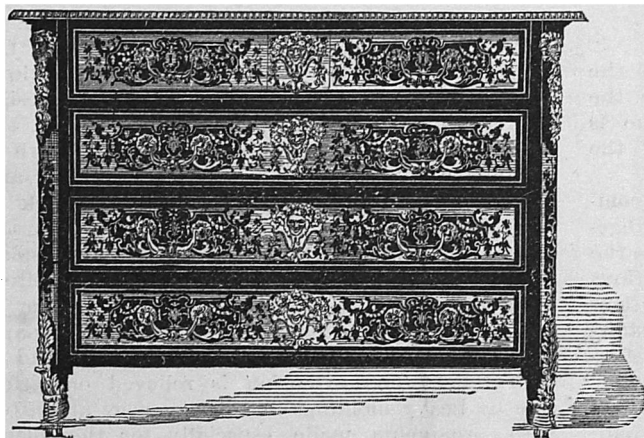
Under Louis XV. we find an absolute transformation and grandeur gives place to the caprice of *rocailles* and *chicorées* whose exaggeration is excused by the perfection of chiseling achieved by men like Meisssonier and Philippe, Caffieri and Cressent, a perfection which in smaller objects like candlesticks and girandoles attains the delicacy of jewelry. In the bronzes of the reign of Louis XVI., the perfection of workmanship and the exquisiteness of style surpass all description, and their rivalry with the finest jewelry is rendered more close by the invention of unburnished gilding known as *ormolu*.

Our illustrations will give the reader some idea of the beauty of



CYLINDER DESK, IN MAHOGANY, WITH BRONZE ORNAMENTS, BY RIESSNER.

French ornamentation in metal, and in order to complete his information on this subject, we will add a few notes about the most celebrated French artists in metal, for whose works are now paid such enormous prices when by chance they appear in sales. First of all let us take Gouthière, who achieved as great perfection in the art of chiseling bronze as André Charles Boulle achieved in that of *marqueterie*. During his lifetime he was already called "le célèbre Gouthière," and now-a-days for his bronzes are paid their weight in gold. Nevertheless we know very little about Gouthière. He must have been born about 1740. At any rate in 1771 he took the title of "Ciseleur et Doreur du Roy," and he had already received from Mme. du Barry the sum of 36,000 livres—\$20,000 of modern money—for works executed by



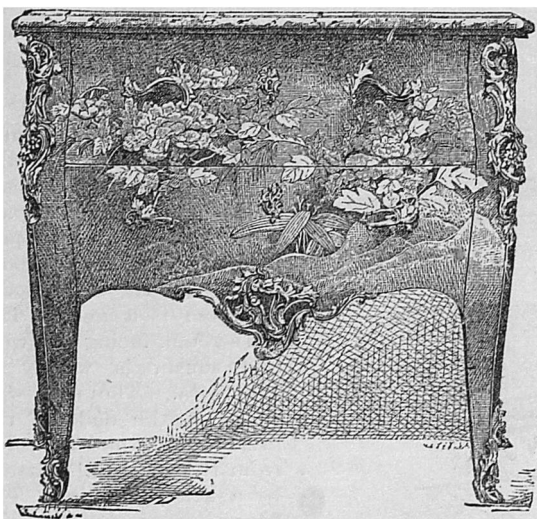
COMMODOE, WITH MARQUETERIE ORNAMENTATION.

him; his reputation, then, at this time must have been considerable, and we can hardly suppose that he was less than thirty years of age.

The accounts of Mme. du Barry will for some time keep us acquainted with Gouthière, and at the same time give our modern millionaire an idea of eighteenth century notions of magnificence. In the years 1772 and 1773 further payments are noted to Gouthière of sums of three, four, five, six, ten and twenty thousand livres which, added to the 36,000 livres above mentioned, makes in less than three years a total of 124,000 livres—say some \$75,000 of our money—paid by Mme. du Barry to Gouthière for work executed in her house at Versailles or in her villa at Luciennes, "where she spent," as a pamphlet of the time says, "more than the mistresses of ten kings put together."

The pamphleteer, let us add, is inexact; during the period of her favor, Mme. du Barry cost France about twelve and a half millions of livres, about one third of what Mme. de Pompadour had spent. But to return to Gouthière, we find his name again in the bills of Le Doux, the architect of Luciennes, for bronzes in the dining-room, 1,794 livres; vestibule, 698 livres; square salon, 19,706 livres; oval salon, 31,272 livres; salon *en cul de four*, 6,660 livres; anti-chamber, 1,109 livres; pedestals, capitals, etc., 20,000 livres. In all 81,239 livres, say nearly \$50,000. The memoirs of the time agree in representing this villa of Luciennes as a perfect paradise.

Villiers, in his *Manuel du voyageur aux environs de Paris*, (year X. of the Republic) says: "It is not so much in master-pieces of the grand kind that art seems here to have surpassed itself,



SMALL COMMODOE, IN VERNIS MARTIN, WITH BRONZE.

as in the most minute ornament of detail, such as the casings of the chimney-pieces, the fire-dogs, the chandeliers, the candle brackets, the cornices, the locks, the espagnolettes, etc. There is not one of the productions which is not perfect and finished and a model of the finest and most exquisite work that industry can produce. Nothing more precious and more finished could be seen

than these bronzes that Gouthière had, so to speak, molded.

"The large salon was adorned with a cornice with brackets, a true masterpiece; another room, the oval salon, was covered with looking-glasses which repeated a superb chimney-piece of lapis of prodigious richness of bronze ornaments. Since these works were executed the art of fashioning bronze has never been carried to a higher degree of perfection."

The designs of the bronze decoration of Luciennes were made by the architect Le Doux, but most of the bronzes executed by Gouthière for Mme. du Barry were from designs by Jean Denis Dugoure, as is proved by documents cited by Baron Davillier in his volume on *Le cabinet du duc d'Aumont et les amateurs de son temps* from which we find that Gouthière worked for the Duc d'Aumont, the Duchess de Mazarin, M. de Bondy, etc., besides his royal patrons, who permitted him the title of *Ciseleur et Doreur du Roy*.

For the benefit of the curious it must be stated that all Gouthière's works are not signed and some even of his best works are unsigned, while on the other hand there exists mediocre work bearing this illustrious signature. The explanation of this fact is that Gouthière, besides being an artist, was a dealer who had to produce second-rate work for those who had not the purse of the du Barry. There is also a tradition that Gouthière had a relation and homonym established in the same trade at Dijon.

We lose trace of Gouthière's movements for some years, but in 1789 we again find him working for Mme. du Barry, and in spite of the events of the following years the ex-favorite did not think of modifying her tastes for spending; during the years 1790-93, she constantly employed the famous chiseler, who under the Republic took the simple title of "Sculpteur et Ciseleur."

In 1793 Mme. du Barry was condemned to death and executed on December 8 of the same year. Shortly after her death the Commission des Arts of the department of Seine-et-Oise went to Luciennes and took an inventory of all the goods seized by the Domain, as were those of all who were condemned to death or who emigrated. Gouthière, who had not received any money from Mme. du Barry for a long time, demanded of the Domain (18 August, 1795,) the payment of his bills, which amounted to 756,000 livres.

In his demand Gouthière explained that "he had contributed by his works to the magnificence of Luciennes; the chiseling of the bronzes of a single pedestal and of a few accessories was estimated at 50,000 francs, including the traveling expenses of the workmen; the mounting and fitting of the same ornaments, 46,000 francs; gilding, 63,000. Three other similar pedestals were reckoned at 420,000 francs. Gouthière, however, failed to get payment from the administration, a fate which he shared in common with nearly all Mme. du Barry's numerous creditors. Ten years later, in 1806, Gouthière, evidently ruined long ago, addressed a new demand to the Domain but without success, and being reduced to solicit a place in a hospice, he died in misery.

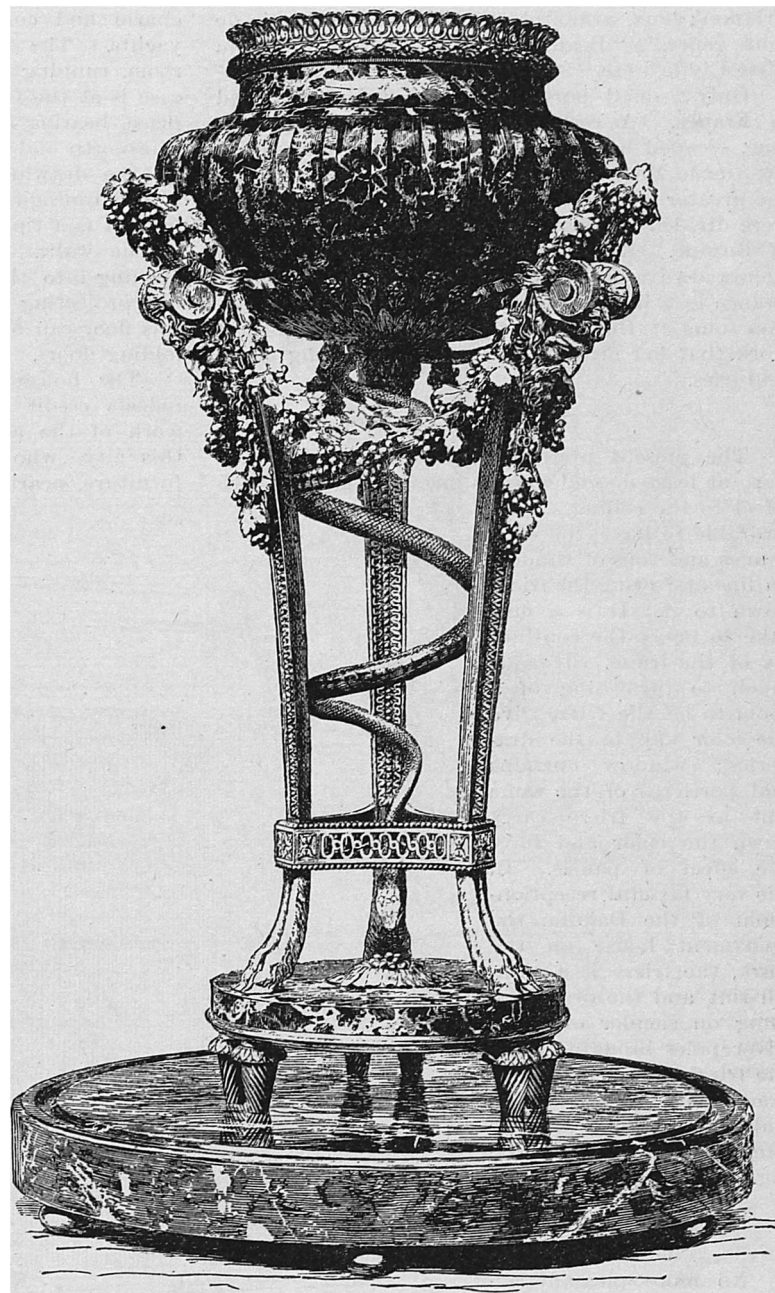
Such was the end of the most celebrated chiseler of bronze that France ever produced, an end even more unfortunate than that of André Charles Boulle, who, according to the expression of one of his contemporaries, "after having served kings and rich men, died very badly off" (*après avoir servi des Rois et des hommes riches, mourut assés mal dans ses affaires*).

The above facts about Gouthière are to be found in the reports of an action brought by his son in 1836 against the heirs of Mme. du Barry who were admitted to a share in the milliard of indemnity granted to the *émigrés* in virtue of the law April 27, 1825. The end of this trial was that the heirs of Mme. du Barry were ordered to pay Gouthière's son 32,600 francs.

Amongst the best known workers in bronze of the time of Louis XVI. whose productions are now often confounded with those of Gouthière, we find Martincourt who is reputed to have been Gouthière's master; Duplessis who made for the manufactory of Sevres the model of the vase known under his name and who was famous for rich mountings in gilt bronze for the vases of agate, porphyry and Sevres that figured in the cabinets of the last century. Duplessis bore the title of "Sculpteur, Fondateur, Ciseleur et Doreur du Roy."

Louis Prieur, who also had the title of "Sculpteur, Ciseleur et Doreur du Roy," was famous for his fine chiseling. Other artists more or less famous were Forty, Le Fèvre, L'Eveillé, Thiéboust, Philippe, Galien, Aze, Godille, Vassou, Rabut, Osmond, Saint Germain, all of which names are noted by M. Davillier in the introduction to the volume on the Duc d'Aumont above referred to.

Philippe Caffieri was celebrated under Louis XV. and died in the same year as that prince in 1774. Philippe, who is not to be confounded with his brother Jean Jacques Caffieri, the celebrated sculptor, was born at Paris in 1714. The family of Caffieri, of Neapolitan origin, was established in



METAL FRUIT OR FLOWER STAND.

France by Filippo Caffieri who, under the protection of Mazarin, executed important works of sculpture in wood and bronze for Louis XIV. This Filippo had two sons, Charles Philippe and Jacques, of whom one was a sculptor like his father and the other a brass founder and chiseler. The son of Jacques, Philippe, second of the name, was the famous chiseler with whom we are here concerned. During his lifetime Philippe Caffieri acquired a great reputation for his furniture fittings in bronze, and the old catalogues show that his works were much sought after.

What became of all these marvels that Caffieri and Boulle and Gouthière and the other famous artists produced and which found a worthy resting place in the châteaux of Versailles, Trianon and other royal residences, or in the sumptuous mansions of the nobility? Alas! the Revolution and the reign of Terror dispersed them to the four winds. During that dreadful time how many masterpieces were destroyed by vandalism!

On August 10, at the time of the sacking of the Tuileries, the furniture, the clocks, and the

most precious objects of art were flung out of the windows. The sumptuous furniture of the château of Versailles, put up for public sale, was knocked down at ridiculously low prices, paid for in assignats and became the prey of brokers and dealers in old iron. The objects in the Garde Meuble met with the same fate. Every day the committees of the Convention were busy drawing up inventories of objects destined to be sold; one day the committee was working at the house of Louis Stanislas Xavier Capet, la femme Victoire Capet, la femme Adelaide Capet, la femme de Charles Philippe, la femme du Barry or else at the house of Crussol, ci-devant Duzès, of Rohan-Rochefort, etc. And in these inventories you find notes of all kinds of things, particularly statues and paintings, destined to be destroyed or burned.

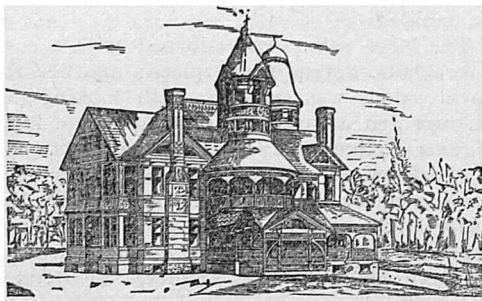
Then soon there came sales every day, and tapestries, rich stuffs embroidered with gold and silver, magnificent furniture, pictures and bronzes, Sèvres vases, vases of porphyry and precious materials mounted with bronze chiseled like jewelry, were all exposed for sale in the gutter and in the lowest quarters of Paris.

The shops of the brokers and dealers were encumbered with these spoils, and on the walls of the city were innumerable bills announcing the sale "à prix fixe de meubles de Versailles et de Trianon; feux, armoires, porcelaine, Ebenisterie de tout genre," "Beaux Meubles provenant de la Liste Civile," etc.

Only a small portion of these riches remained in France. A certain number of objects, it is true, escaped being sold and are still preserved in the Garde Meuble and the National châteaux; but the greater of these spoils of royalty and nobility were divided amongst the collectors of the whole of Europe. Russia and England especially had agents always on the watch, and it was thus that France lost in these terrible times of the Revolution some of the most exquisite and most elegant work that her artisans had produced during many centuries.

The present preference is for rather low ceilings, at least no endeavor is made to give a high effect to the ceiling. It is desirable to have the door frames and tops of window on line and bring the frieze down to it. It is a mistake to break the continuity of the frieze. It adds much to furnishing of a room to let the frieze give the color key to the draperies; window curtains and portières of the same tint as the frieze carry down the color and have the effect of panels. In the very tasteful reception-room of the Dakota, the apartment house on the Park, the frieze is a pinkish tint and the draperies, hung on slender oxydized silver poles brought up to the frieze, are of satin, the same tint. Against the wall of grayish green the effect is extremely pleasing.

No more pleasant arrangement of a small conservatory in a city house can be designed than by attaching it to the dining-room. This is usually the most feasible, as it makes an extension to the extension without interfering with the general scheme of the house. Such a conservatory in a handsome house now building is screened from the dining-room by a picturesque arrangement of glass. The ground is clear glass and allows for a vision of the greenery of the conservatory. But over this plain ground wanders a vine with purple clusters of grapes, yellow figs, and the luscious fruit of the pomegranite. It is a pretty idea and in this case attractively carried out.



A HANDSOME SPRINGFIELD HOME.

E. H. BARNEY'S NEW RESIDENCE OVERLOOKING
THE CONNECTICUT RIVER.

ANOTHER handsome house now graces the valley, and in a few weeks will be the home of E. H. Barney and his family, who is widely known as the inventor and maker of the Barney & Berry skates.

The rooms in the house are marvels of compactness and have the space-economizing arrangement and the elegance of minor details that are the charm and comfort of the saloons of luxurious yachts. The ample hall serves as a reception-room, running the width of the house. The staircase is at the further end, and there also is a fireplace, bearing in terra cotta the name "Pecowsic." The north end with the two bay windows is taken by the drawing-room. Opposite, across the hall, is the dining-room, and in the tower built out from it is a tiny, cozy library; the shelves are set in the walls. The sitting-room is on the south, opening into the dining-room and having a deep bay projecting toward the river. All the rooms on this floor can be thrown practically in one by the folding doors.

The house is perfected in every detail and reflects credit on the careful and conscientious work of the architects, Richmond & Seabury of this city, who have also made designs for the furniture, nearly all of which is made especially

for Mr. Barney. Each room has a fireplace set with tiles, a figured iron back, and around and above them are mantels of carved mahogany and oak. These handsome hard-woods are freely used.

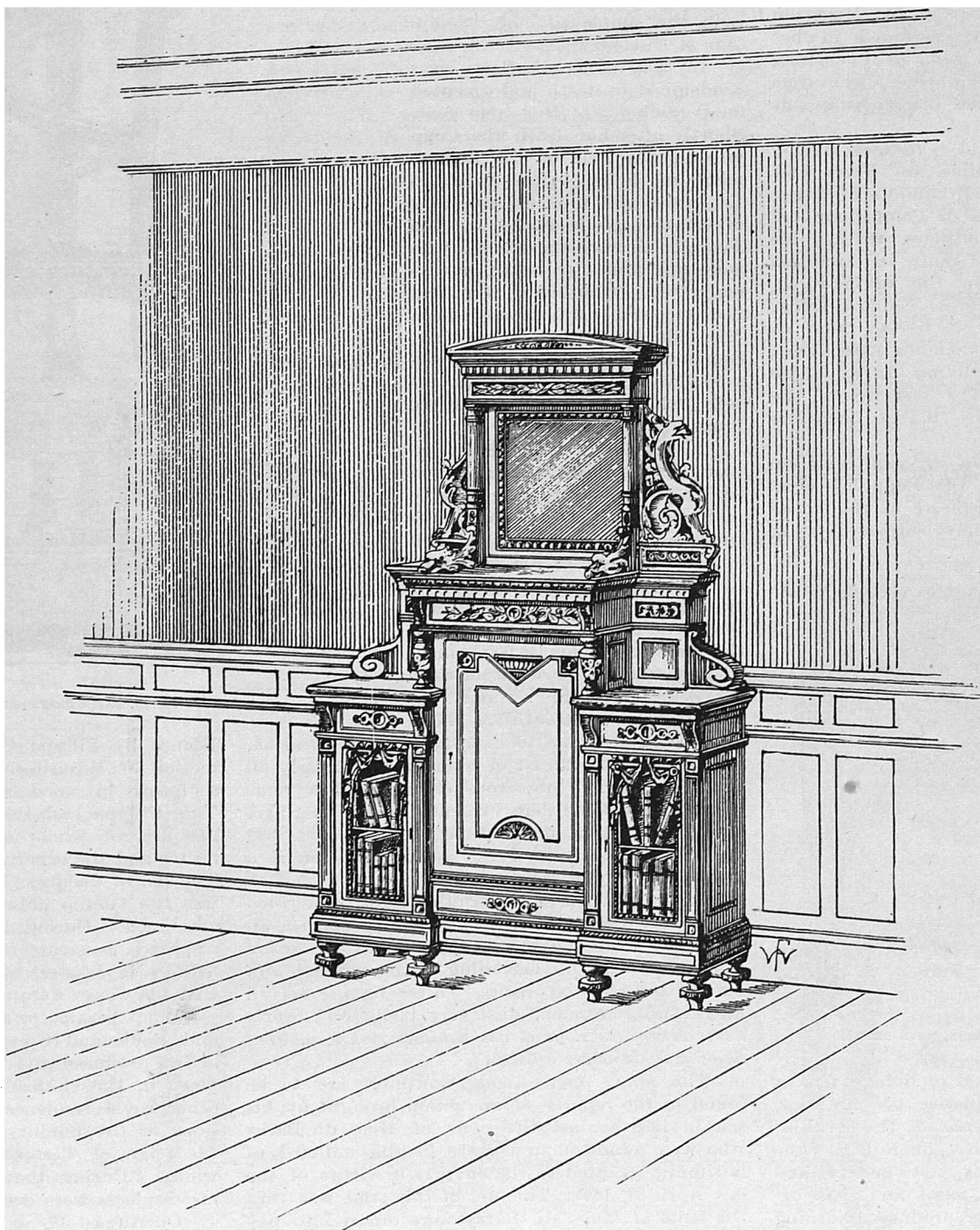
The dining-room shows an artistic china cupboard and a sideboard, all the work of T. M. Walker & Co. of this city.

The wall decorations have more than a passing interest. They are furnished by Whitney & Adams of this city and are, without doubt, the most elaborate to be found in this part of the State. The larger part of the house is decorated in Lincrusta-Walton and heavy velvet papers. The sitting-room is decorated wholly in Lincrusta-Walton, the dado being of antique metal, the effect in the colors bearing on green, the side wall and ceiling a Japanese design, the whole coloring blending with the mahogany work.

The dining-room has a heavy wainscoting of oak. The side wall is an English design of the "Renaissance" style and colored in antique bronzes; the frieze is also of an English design and make. The ceiling is one square panel, the center or filling being an open rosette with a tracing in relief connecting smaller rosettes and forming small squares. The ground work is treated in one plain gold metallic color, the rosettes in fire bronze. The styling is a small geometrical pattern and the extension or ceiling band forming the panel is a combination of borders having as a background a small "burlap" figure. Each corner is relieved by a lion's head in bold relief. The extension is relieved on either side by heavy moldings and the corners are fitted with ornaments made especially for the place. The side walls of the library are finished in color to give the effect of leather. The ceiling is a small cobweb design; back of the shelving is a heavy velvet paper to protect the books, forming a dark rich background.

The hall is probably the most artistically arranged and originally planned of any work in the house. The side wall is a small geometrical design, all in plain terra-cotta color. The frieze is a bull's-eye design, used with fine effect. The ceiling in the lower hall is laid out in irregular squares, a band about five inches wide being used in forming the panels and the filling is of two designs. The ceiling in the second hall is similar to the first, while the third or tower ceiling is of one design of the "radiata" style. The rooms on this floor are treated to harmonize, so that when all are thrown together the effect is as one room. The parlor side wall is of paper of a scroll design on reddish copper ground. The figures are raised in different colors, the dominant tone being chosen to harmonize with the rich mahogany work. The dado is of Lincrusta, as are the frieze and ceiling. The dado is composite, eastern and Egyptian.

The alcove leading from the second hall is one of the richest nooks, with its dado in high relief, its wide frieze of floral design and its nearly plain side wall, with a ceiling of bird's eye, all treated in color bronzes. The guest chambers, looking to the north, are treated in part with Lincrusta and in part with heavy velvet paper. The little sewing-room leading off the main sleeping-room is a gem. The son's room, facing the west and south, is wholly of Lincrusta. The side wall is rustic, the dado of the same order and divided from the side wall pattern by a heavy molding. The frieze is made up of panels in high relief of various designs and appropriate to the place. Below the frieze and above the side wall design is a plain pattern about eighteen inches wide, designed for the hanging of a rifle, canoe paddle, etc. — *Springfield Republican*.



LIBRARY CABINET, DESIGNED BY WILLIAM FROHNE.